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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Monday 9th February 2026 at 7.00pm

Present:

Cllr H Potter - Chair, Cllr Moore Vice - Chair, Cllr Tynan, Cllr Bish, Cllr Barnes, Cllr Cllr Matters, Cllr Howton, Cllr Lovejoy.

In attendance: The Clerk CDC – Cllr Henry Potter
WSSC: Cllr Jeremy Hunt 8 members of the public

1. Apologies

Cllr Raikes - unwell

2. Declarations of interest

There were none.

3. Minutes – to agree and sign the minutes of 5th January 2026 meeting.

The Minutes were unanimously agreed to be a true and accurate record and were duly signed by the Chairman.

4. County Councillor, District Councillor and Chairman's report
Cllr Jeremy Hunt WSSC

- i. Devolution and Budget update - At a meeting of the WSSC Cabinet on Tuesday 3rd February the proposed balanced budget, which includes significant capital investment and increased net investment in key services for communities, was approved. The Cabinet also reaffirmed its commitment to the devolution process, which will see the creation of a new combined authority for the whole of Sussex. The decision was made following confirmation from Government that the Sussex & Brighton Combined County Authority will be created this May, with the first mayoral election due to take place in May 2028. Once established, powers and funding will be transferred from national government to the local Combined County Authority, who will provide strategic leadership on issues such as economic growth, highways and transport, housing, and public safety. The new combined authority will bring additional investment into the region whilst also meaning that the authority will have a voice at national level. Sussex delivers

huge economic benefit to the country, and the creation of this new combined authority will only strengthen this. The county council will continue to work with East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council on the devolution process, ahead of the anticipated legal creation of the new authority in the spring.

- ii. The Cabinet also agreed the next steps for its balanced budget for the year ahead. The proposed budget will now go before Full Council on Friday 20 February for final approval. The county council delivers over 300 essential services, to around 915,000 residents, across 769 square miles. The gross amount the council spends on delivering these services for residents is expected to be just over £2.3bn in 2026/27. For example:

- £1,346.7m Managing schools and education, children's social care and support
- £577.2m Caring for adults and keeping people healthy
- £90.1m Protecting the environment, recycling and waste disposal
- £84.6m Maintaining our roads and providing transport
- £83.8m Running our organisation
- £72.8m Fire and Rescue services and supporting communities
- £5.8m Supporting the local economy
- £61.9m Financing our capital programme and other corporate items

The expenditure included a gross revenue increase of £65.1m to meet increasing demand pressures and costs, particularly in social care, home to school transport, and special educational needs and disabilities. After taking account of grants, fees and charges, and other contributions, the council's proposed net revenue budget for 2026/27, was just under £883m. The most important aspect of the council's budget for the year was that it had been able to balance it without any cuts to frontline services or a reliance on reserves. This was something that was getting increasingly challenging, as could be seen by the increasing number of local authorities who were turning to government for additional assistance. There was no doubt that, without a massive injection of additional government funding which was very unlikely, the current model of two-tier local government was unviable in the long term. This was why it was key to ensure that the upcoming local government reorganisation did deliver on the predicted savings. Far from any additional government funding, under the terms of the government's recent Fair Funding Review, the County Council's funding would actually be reduced by an additional £30m over the next 3 years. This was through a new process introduced in the FFR, called Council Tax Equalisation. This would be where the government would effectively take funding from counties it perceived to be reasonably wealthy - mainly shire counties in the southeast such as West Sussex — and would distribute it to counties it perceived to be poorer - mainly in the midlands and the north. Finally, despite finding in-year savings of around £30m in order to balance the council's books, they had had no choice but to increase council tax. Government funding was calculated on the assumption that WSCC would raise its council tax by the full amount. If the council didn't it would lose even more funding, making balancing the budget almost impossible. Regretfully, therefore, the council was proposing to increase the WSCC share of council tax by

2.99% for core services, plus 2% for Adult Social Care, giving a total increase of 4.99%.

For 2026/27 this would mean an increase to the band D tax rate of £7.49 per month. The council meeting could be viewed online via a webcast and residents could read more about the budget setting process at www.westsussex.gov.uk/budget .

Residents could also learn more about devolution and the creation of the new strategic combined authority at www.westsussex.gov.uk/campaigns/future-of-local-government-in-sussex.

iii. **Highways Update**

The West Sussex County Council Highways team had been working hard to respond to issues on the county's road network that had occurred as a result of the recent extreme weather including flooding, fallen trees and potholes.

This winter had seen a return to freezing temperatures and heavy rain with recent storms causing significant disruption across the county's roads. Since September the council had experienced above average rainfall levels, with January providing double the monthly average in some areas of the county. During storm events teams had been deployed around the clock to manage safety risks and keep the roads clear and moving. The most recent storm brought 81 emergency callouts with incidents ranging from fallen trees and debris hazards to damaged infrastructure and impassable routes. 31 of these callouts had been directly related to flooding.

When the council received reports of significant flooding, the teams worked hard to assess and manage risks at each affected site. The council's safety response service and reactive drainage jetting crews would clear flooding where they would be able to do so. If there were underlying issues that needed to be investigated, they would prioritise key roads that were being impacted or where there was an immediate risk to property. The council also had proactive crews who were focussed on checking for drainage grid obstructions, replacing or resetting damaged drainage grids and clearing channels for water to flow from the carriageway to ditches or water courses to remove flooding. Since the start of April 2025, the council had cleared over 75,000 drainage channels as part of its proactive maintenance programme.

It was important to note that when there had been prolonged periods of heavy rain, the sheer volume of water meant that no highway drainage could work effectively, as the outlet for highway water was over capacity and the water in the system simply couldn't go anywhere. There were also some instances where it was not possible for the council to clear the flood water as it had been caused by run-off from neighbouring land or overflow from flooded water courses such as rivers. Where it was safe to do so, roads would be kept open with appropriate flood warning signage in place. However, where there was a risk to safety, full closures would be put in place with signposted diversions. Residents were urged to:

- Avoid driving through floodwater
- Report significant hazards via the usual emergency channels
- Follow updates issued through official communication channels

Flooding was not the only issue being caused by the weather. The pro-longed period of cold then wet weather had meant that there was a spike in the number of potholes on the network. So far in January the council had logged 3,725 pothole repair jobs with its contractor. That was around 1,000 more than the same time in 2025, when it had been a mild winter, but it was still significantly less than the previous two years.

January 2023 saw the council raise over 7,000 pothole repair jobs with their contractor. The potholes were repaired based on their severity. The target for the least severe defects was to complete repairs within 28 days, however the council always worked to deliver them sooner where possible. For example, in December these repairs had been completed in an average of just 12 days. This month the council had increased the number of crews it had operating to respond to the uptick in defects. The council was also running ‘twilight crews’ to extend the working day and had crews working on Saturdays to keep on top of the work. Despite the increased volume of work in January, this additional resource had meant that the council was still completing these repairs in an average of 15 days.

Councillor Joy Dennis, cabinet member for Highways and Transport said: “We appreciate that disruption on the roads is never welcome. We are doing all we can to keep the roads open and repair any damage caused by the extreme weather. Please bear with us as, although we have crews operating in all weathers, there will be times where we cannot rectify every situation straight away. As soon as the weather improves, we will be working to resolve all issues caused as well as investigating longer term solutions where needed.”

iv. **Local Issues:**

Halnaker Windmill – Cllr Hunt had little to add to last month’s report, (which was that the tenders would go out on 24th February, the valuation would be on 6th March and the contract awarded by 21st March), apart from just adding that, subject to receiving a satisfactory tender, the plan at this time was to carry out the works between early June and late August this year. Of course, that would also be subject to the weather and to satisfactory access being agreed with the landowner. As regards the crack in the WWII bunker, they were awaiting a report from the structural engineer.

Drains in the Street

Cllr Hunt had reported the blocked drains adjacent to 67/68 The Street. The three gullies had been inspected and, despite heavy rainfall the previous night, the Highway Steward had only found slight ponding (similar to the resident’s pictures) that would not impact on highway safety. He had however noted that the three gullies on the western side were clearly blocked and, as their scheduled clearing was not until early summer 2027, he had raised a priority job to have them cleared. However, due to the present situation the job was not on the high priority list, so Cllr Hunt asked to be informed if it were to become worse, with extensive flooding that didn’t disappear after two hours. He said that there had been a lot of enquiries about flooding over the last month or two, a lot of which had come through councillors. This did mean a lot of extra work for the admin staff, who then had to input those

enquiries onto the highways reporting system. Members had therefore been asked to remind residents that any highways issue, including flooding, should be reported by residents directly through the WSCC website. A case reference number would then be received and would be updated. If subsequently Councillors wanted to raise the issue with Cllr Hunt, supplying him with the case reference number would make it a lot quicker! The reporting portal can be found at

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem->

- v. Finally, Cllr Hunt reminded residents not to forget to keep an eye on the WSCC website, especially the news and campaigns' page where residents could keep up to date with all the latest news.

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/news-and-campaigns/>

Jeremy Hunt – West Sussex County Council Member for Chichester North
c/o Cabinet Office, County Hall, West Street, Chichester, PO19 1RQ

End of report

Cllr Potter said that he had written to Halnaker Hill Farms asking them if they wanted to take over the windmill entirely. He has yet to receive a response.

Mr Leah said that he had asked for the windmill to become a permanent agenda item. The clerk said that it had been agreed at the last meeting that if there were any news it would always be in Cllr Hunt's report therefore it would not be necessary.

Mr Leah asked Cllr Hunt whether he had been able to find out why the data collection speed wire was no longer functioning. Cllr Hunt had not been able to gather any information but would look into it further.

The average speed cameras are being trialled by the police and are not being paid for by the county council.

vi. **Cllr Henry Potter Chair's Report**

- a) Cllr Potter had attended the online CDC/ All Parishes meeting on 02/02 where the agenda included the latest update on Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution. Progress, which, as expected was slow to say the least. All of the Authorities in Sussex had submitted their preferred proposals to the Ministry for Communities, Housing and Local Government and a decision on their acceptance should be made in March. Cllr Potter found it hard to understand some Members of these authorities. The government guidance was that any Unitary Authority should serve a population of circa 500,000. This to preserve reasonable proportional representation. WSCC were proposing three unitaries, W Sussex, E Sussex and Brighton and Hove. This would give W.Sussex 960,000 – a population far in excess of the half million guideline. Cllr Potter questioned whether the MCHLG would approve this. Brighton and Hove, without consulting with all the others had proposed FIVE unitaries, which would require Boundary changes. The

government had made it very clear from the outset that they would not consider any proposal which required Boundary reviews. These were lengthy procedures which would slow the whole Devolution and LGR process down, something the government was very keen to avoid. In Cllr Potter's view the proposal for what may become known as the West Sussex Downs and Coastal Authority for Adur, Worthing, Arun and CDC was the most sensible proposal of all. Each of these authorities had substantial areas in the Downs hence the inclusion of 'Downs' in the title. This would serve a population of 460,000 a figure close enough to the guideline. The announcement in March would be interesting particularly regarding the WSCC proposal.

- b) Another topic on the agenda had been the soon to become law, the Renters Rights Act which was to reinforce tenants' rights regarding eviction notices. The length of a tenancy could no longer be fixed, and they could roll over year on year. Evictions would be far more difficult to invoke without sound reasons.
Needless to say this will require additional staff for the Housing Standards Team to deal with the extra work which would be bound to arise. However, the law does not apply to private tenancies yet.
- c) Finally, the third item on the Agenda had been the impending roll out of the food waste collection scheme which was being rolled out by government. Bins and 'kettles' would be delivered to each home in time for the collections to begin in March. As 27% of the population of Chichester District were pensioners not noted for waste, Cllr Potter questioned if the expense and effort involved was worth the while! Two at home hardly have two handfuls of actual food waste each week! We shall see.
- d) On the home front agreement of all involved to plant the trees supplied by CDC under the Plant more Trees initiative in various locations in the Parish was nearly complete. Agreement had been reached with Barfoots Farms who were currently contract farming (as opposed to tenant farming) all of the land which wasn't planted with vines, with the Green Organisation (the owners of the land) now, with the trees to hand and the Rangers anxious to get them in the ground. Cllr Potter had been informed that Mr. Rupert Green who I believed to be the CEO of the Green Organisation, had now decided he needed to look at the scheme.
- e) It was a sad moment for the council that after 11 years, Imogen the Clerk had tendered her resignation. Her last meeting will be in April. It is a known fact that good clerks are very hard to find, this has frequently been mentioned by Trevor Leggo, the CEO of the Associations of Local Councils. So, the search begins!
Cllr Potter had witnessed a number of PC Clerk changes to the Parishes in his CDC Ward, and they had seldom been easy.
- f) The Parish seems to have been fortunate that despite the exceptional amount of rain which had fallen since the beginning of the year, there had been no flooding in the usual places. The river Lavant had suddenly risen causing serious incidents of flooded sewers, and flooded roads everywhere

yet the bomb craters scattered around the Parish had shown no signs of filling, at least at the moment but there is much more forecast.
End of report.

vii. **Cllr Henry Potter CDC report**

- a) The Council held an online meeting with the Parishes on Monday 02/02 the main topic once again was an update on the progress of the Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Bill. In a nutshell all Local Authorities have submitted their preferred options to become Unitary Authorities. The Minister for Communities, Housing and Local Government will review these submissions and announce, in March, his decisions. The proposals were varied and the final announcement will be of great interest. Cllr Potter remained very sceptical about this entire Bill.
- b) Another agenda subject was the new Renters' Protection Act which should afford greater protection for tenants with no fault evictions becoming unlawful and higher living standards were included. Cllr Potter thought that it was not particularly helpful for landlords and he could see a number selling up and getting out of the market resulting in fewer homes for rent.
- c) Further details of the roll out of the new waste food collection scheme have been published. It will not happen for every household, at the same time, it will be phased in gradually while routes and collection days are scheduled.
- d) An agreement has finally been reached for the tenancy of the final units in St. James Industrial Estate. Four units are to become four privately operated 'Padel' tennis courts. This comes after the costly, but comprehensive rebuilding of all the units in the Estate completed in 2023.
- e) Decisions to be taken by the Cabinet on the 10th and then full council on the setting of the Budget for 26/27 and a grant to Hyde Homes towards the building of fifteen Social Rent homes on a site in Birdham. This is becoming a more popular way of securing homes to rent, a similar grant was made in respect of thirteen rental homes in North Mundham where a developer could not be found to build 10 market value and 3 rental properties. The money comes from what's known as 'Commuted Sums' collected from developments of more than 10 homes with no provision for the 30% affordable units.
- f) The budget for the coming year will be £18,133.500, the District Council element of the total precept will be increased by £5.74, up from £192.06 to £197.80, this for all Band D taxpayers.
- g) Finally, Cllr Potter had deep concerns regarding the planned works to the junction of the A285 and Stane Street to render it safer for turning traffic considering the traffic plan agreed under the Approval for the Rolls Royce Motor Circuit assembly extension. This should have been implemented prior to the multitude of HGV's accessing the site during construction. It was also important for the Vehicles delivering components to the facility upon completion What concerned Cllr Potter was the impact on the 55

Stagecoach bus service serving Westhampnett, Maudlin, Boxgrove and Tangmere. These residents had suffered enough in the past during Southern Water operations and to lose this part of the service yet again was not good enough. Traffic lights were to be deployed and access for residents would be maintained so he hoped the bus service would not be interrupted.

Cllr Potter had written to WSCC Highways expressing his concern but he had had no response to date.

I have received another phone call from the resident in Crouch Cross Lane complaining about the oak tree on the grass verge outside her bungalow. It is causing her some distress and when in leaf overshadows her house. I have to agree it has reached massive size now and needs some pruning. I hope Jeremy can clarify who is responsible. It is in that part of the street so I would assume it to be WSCC Highways 'bag'

End of Report.

5. Public Question Time from residents (Standing orders 3d – 3l)

A member of the public asked who owned the Chichester Gate car park as they had changed the nighttime charging which was really affecting the nighttime economy.

Cllr Potter suggested that Cllr Tracey Bangert be written to at CDC.

The resident also said that the car/van parking right up to the junction at Priors Acre was dangerous and causing an obstruction (which makes it illegal to park on the road even without yellow lines). The council agreed that it would be a good idea to issue pamphlets to residents asking them to park on the other side of the road.

Action

Cllr Henry Potter

6. Crockerhill -update

Plans were being drawn up for the pub and lots of work was going on in the background. Vehicles from the garage are removed at night but they are left in the road during the day. They have no further news about the court cases.

The clerk to write to the Traffic Commissioner's office. The garage should be displaying the operator's licence.

Action

Clerk

7. Boxgrove Neighbourhood Plan update (Report from David Leah Chair of NP group).

The Modified Neighbourhood Plan has now been submitted to CDC. The various consultations are being progressed by them, and our expected timetable is that the Modified Neighbourhood Plan should be able to achieve a referendum by September 2026.

CDC planning has requested further information about the ecology buffers on the Folly site and consequently this is now not likely to go to the CDC Planning Committee meeting until 15 April 2026. The team and the Boxgrove Parish Council will be supporting this.

The NP team have had a meeting, during January, with the planners and land agent for the Longmeadow site in Boxgrove. This revised scheme is for a 10/12 unit development on the western portion of the site.

The proposal is at a very early stage, but we understand that there have been pre-app discussions with CDC.

It was resolved that each side would advise CDC of our discussions and that Smith Simmons, the planners, would make a representation through the Reg 16 consultation process. This would prevent further delays in our MNP and it would be for the examiner to decide whether to include the site in our plan.

We are aware that ground water monitoring devices have now been installed in the vineyard/field along the A285 in Halnaker.

We will advise when further information becomes available.

Please follow the following link for any further information.

<https://boxgroveparishcouncil.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/our-neighbourhood-plan/>

8. Planning Applications to be decided

Planning number	Address	Detail	Comment
SDNP/25/0490 1/HOU	Seabeach Farm , A285 Thicket Lane To Eartham Lane, Eartham, West Sussex, PO18 0LX	Extension to existing annexe, refurbishments to open barn, external alterations to existing barn, modern barn and cart shed, erection of new outbuilding and installation of air source heat pump.	No Comment

9. Motion to adopt updated Model Publication Scheme

Deferred

10. Clerk's Report

i. **Correspondence received:**

Request to use Boxgrove Recreation Ground for Village Fayre on 4th July 2026.

This was unanimously **APPROVED** by the council.

ii. **Consideration of purchase of devices for Councillors for GDPR purposes.**

Cllr Moore would be interested and will confirm with the clerk.

iii. **Payments for Consideration**

The payments for consideration were proposed by Cllr Lovejoy, seconded by Cllr Moore and unanimously **RESOLVED**.

iv. **Bank Reconciliation – circulated**

11. Boxgrove Rangers Report

Mr Dipple reported that 14 of the 25 trees had been delivered – and were 6' trees not saplings. They will start planting as soon as possible.

12. Agenda items for the next meeting:

Any items please send to the clerk.

Signed: _____
Cllr Henry Potter - Chair

Dated: _____

Boxgrove Parish Council Financial Statement
Meeting February 9th 2026

Balances on accounts £83,263.09
£83,263.09

Received since last meeting

Birdham PC £35.98
total **£35.98**

Paid since last meeting

St Blaise	churchyard grant	£800.00
DCH	plans for boulodrome	£785.00
RJ Dixon	grass cutting	£240.00
I Whitaker	salary	£906.50
NEST	pension	£66.11
hmrc	contributions	£237.27
scribe	sub	£66.00
JM Agricultural	tractor repair	£107.72
		£3,208.60

Payments for consideration

I Whitaker	Salary	£906.50
scribe	sub	66
nest	pension	66.11
Runcton Farm Shop	Christmas tree	79
ProcessMatters2	website	180
ProcessMatters2	np	1100
planning app	boulodrome	379
		£2,776.61

Bank reconciliation February 9th 2026

Bank accounts as of February 4th 2026

current account	£83,263.09
total	£83,263.09

opening balance 1st April 2025	£68,868.91
add receipts in the year	54768.78
less payments in the year	£40,374.60
Balance	£83,263.09

less

reserve @ 50% of annual precept of £50639	
Total	£25,319.40

less ring-fenced funds

neighbourhood plan grant	£0.00
cricket pavilion extension designated reserve	£13,059.83
capital replacement fund	£1,000.00
Boulodrome	£6,721.00
Trees	£4,000.00
Resilience	£3,000.00
Contingency	£1,500.00
Car park fund	£2,500.00
Fountain	£1,336.00
Traffic calming group	£1,916.55
Total	£35,033.38

total available funds	Total	£22,910.31
(less ring fenced and reserve)		

Outstanding Loan for Village Hall	£53,858.74
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